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## Military-political Trends within the CIS during the Chechen Campaign

### Part I: The Multilateral Approach

#### **Zusammenfassung**

When the Chechen campaign was still in full scale Russia secured the stationing of Russian troops in Belarus, Armenia and Georgia through bilateral treaties. In addition, military cooperation treaties were signed with Kazakhstan and Belarus. During the first half of 1995, several important steps toward military cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) were taken. The article analyses the recent trend of integration and examines the development of military-political cooperation within the CIS with the focus on Russia. The main points of Russian CIS military policy is analysed: joint air defence, joint border protection and implementation of the Collective Security Treaty.

#### **Introduction**

In some respects the Russian military campaign in Chechnya could be seen as a watershed in Russia's post-Cold War existence. As the campaign unfolded, the problems of the Russian army were - to an unprecedented degree - held up in public. President Boris Yeltsin highlighted the problems of the army in his annual message the Russian Federation Federal Assembly in February.

Unfortunately, the present armed forces, which evolved historically in case of world wars or major regional wars, are inadequately prepared - in terms of their composition, organizational structure, manning level, combat and operational training, and level of equipment - to ensure Russia's security interests, should conflicts

of a local nature arise.<sup>1</sup>

In great contrast to this apparent confusion, the trend towards military and security related integration in the Commonwealth of Independent States seems largely unaffected - though not so visible. Nevertheless, since the Chechen campaign started, a number of military treaties have been signed, which could indicate a new Russian resolve in its relations with the countries of the CIS. We will examine these treaties with the focus on Russia.

During the first half of 1995, two CIS Heads of State Summits were held: one in Almaty 10 February, and a second one in Minsk 26 May.<sup>2</sup> The plans for a joint air defence system were taking a more concrete form. In addition, bilateral treaties on the stationing of Russian troops in Belarus, Armenia and Georgia were signed during this period, as well as military cooperation treaties with Kazakhstan and Belarus. What conclusions can be drawn from these treaties? Do they indicate a new Russian strategy in the "near abroad"? Will the Chechen campaign - instead of putting an end to the efforts of CIS integration - instead prove to be a turning point in the CIS integration process?

## **The Commonwealth of Independent States**

### *Members and institutions*

The CIS was set up at the break up of the Soviet Union to provide a mechanism for the orderly dissolution of the USSR. The treaty was signed by Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine on 8 December 1991, and by the rest of the members on 21 December. Georgia did not sign, but became member in 1993. Moldova and Azerbaijan did sign but the membership was not ratified by Azerbaijan until 1993 and Moldova in 1994. The three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) are not members. In spite of many conflicts and tensions, the CIS has proven to be much more stable than was expected when it was created.

The following, of all the former Soviet republics, have signed the CIS Treaty and the Collective Security Treaty.

	CIS Treaty	Collective Security Treaty
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<sup>1</sup> Rossiyskaya Gazeta. 17 February 1995. In SWB SU/2233/S1 (21 February 1995).

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the economic cooperation - though vital for the integration process - lies beyond the scope of this paper.

Armenia	x	x
Azerbaijan	x	x
Belarus	x	x
Estonia		
Georgia	x	x
Kazakhstan	x	x
Kyrgyzstan	x	x
Latvia		
Lithuania		
Moldova	x	
Russia	x	x
Tajikistan	x	x
Turkmenistan	x	

Ukraine	x	
Uzbekistan	x	x

## Organs of the Commonwealth

There are more than 50 intergovernmental coordinating and consultative bodies of the CIS, the most important of which are:

**Council of Heads of State** - Highest political organ. Also responsible for defence and border protection.

**Council of Heads of Government**

**Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs**

**Council of Ministers of Defence** - Secretary: Lieutenant-General Leonid Ivashov.

**Staff for Military Cooperation and Coordination** - Working council to the Council of Ministers of Defence.<sup>1</sup> Led by Colonel-General Viktor Samsonov.

**Collective Security Council** - General secretary: Gennadiy Shabannikov.

**Council of the Commanders of Border Troops** - Led by: Colonel General Andrei Nikolayev (also Commander-in-Chief of the Russian border troops).

**Interparliamentary Assembly** - Chairman: Vladimir Shumeiko (also Speaker of the Russian Federation Council).

**Coordinating-Consultative Committee** - Executive secretary: Ivan Korotchenya.

**Economic Union.** The executive body is the **Intergovernmental Economic Committee** - Chairman of the **Presidium**: Aleksei Bolshakov. The Presidium consists of deputy prime ministers delegated by the member states. It is the only CIS organ with executive powers.

**Economic Court** - Secretary General: Viktor Gonchar

**Organs of Sectoral Cooperation** - for instance, agriculture, transport, information, etc.

### *The Collective Security Treaty*

The Collective Security Treaty was signed in Tashkent 15 May 1992<sup>2</sup>. It was concluded for five years and is thus up for renewal in 1997. It is the basis for collective security system of the CIS, but the first two years it remained largely unimplemented. The participating states are to create their own military forces, but apart from Russia and possibly Uzbekistan, few of the other signatory states have managed to create their own stable and effective armed forces.

The signatory states pledge that "if one of the participating states is subjected to aggression by any state or group of states, this will be perceived as aggression against all participating states to this treaty." Furthermore, in the event of aggression "against any of the participating states, all the other participating states will give it the necessary assistance, including military assistance, /.../ by way of exercising the right to collective defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter." (Article 4)

<sup>1</sup> Previously the High Command of the Joint Armed Forces. Changed at the Foreign and Defence Minister meeting 24 August 1993 and the following Heads of State summit 17 September 1993. *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, 1993, No. 17-18, p. 53, and No. 19-20, p. 33. The CIS Joint Armed Forces, in practice, ceased to exist with the creation of Russian Armed Forces in May 1992.

<sup>2</sup> *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 23 May 1992. In FBIS-SOV-92-101, p. 8-9.

The participants also agree to consult each other "on all important questions of international security affecting their interests and will coordinate their positions on these questions." (Article 2)

A Collective Security Council "consisting of the heads of participating states and the commander in chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces" will be created. (Article 3) To use armed forces outside the territory of the participating states "can be effected exclusively in the interests of international security in strict compliance with the UN Charter and the legislation of participating states in the present treaty." (Article 6) In addition, "the present treaty is open to all interested state which share its aims and principles." (Article 10)

## Russia and the CIS

Russia has always viewed the CIS as a structure for close cooperation, not merely a means for a civilised divorce.<sup>2</sup> At present there are several institutions that are involved in Russia's relations in addition to the fact that several CIS positions are held by Russians. The Duma has a committee on CIS affairs (led by Konstantin Zatulin). Likewise, there is a committee on CIS affairs in the Federation Council (led by Gustov); there is a ministry for cooperation with the member states of the CIS (led by Valeriy Serov), as well as a department in the Foreign ministry (led by Leonid Drachevskiy). Furthermore, the Security Council is likely to influence the Russian CIS policy.<sup>3</sup> Russia's main foreign policy goals could be summarised as follows.

- formation of an entirely integrated CIS structure in a multilevel form
- economic cooperation
- protection of Russians outside of the Russian federation (in the near abroad) through, agreements on dual citizenship, human rights, etc.
- promoting CIS as an international organisation

The results on each of these issues, of course, vary and we shall not evaluate them in great detail. On the last issue, it deserves to be noted that the CIS has received observer status at the UN and has had an office in Geneva since April 1995.<sup>4</sup>

Our main interest, however, is the goals of the Russian CIS military policy. Although the foreign and military goals are intertwined, the following issues of the latter can be discerned.

- joint air defence
- joint border protection
- to implement the Collective Security Treaty
- to legalise the stationing of Russian troops outside Russia
- military-technical cooperation<sup>5</sup>
- Russian-led peace-keeping within the CIS

We will mainly deal with the four first of these issues. As we shall see, the recent development seems to indicate a certain momentum on the military political side rather than the foreign policy side. Without

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<sup>1</sup> See footnote 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Sheehy, "The CIS: A Shaky Edifice." RFE/RL Research Report, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1 January 1993.

<sup>3</sup> The actual power of the Security Council, a consultative body to the president, on military and foreign policy is a matter for discussion. See for instance Segodnya, 12 January 1995. "Vsya vlast' sovetam bezopasnosti." The Security council received the task of evaluating the Chechen crisis and assessing the action of the Russian troops.

<sup>4</sup> Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 14 April 1995. In FBIS-SOV-95-073, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> This issue is to a large degree also pursued by the other memberstates of the CIS.

exaggerating, it is worth noting that at least twice during the first half of 1995 the Ministry of Defence has claimed victory over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was done when Russia signed the Partnership for Peace<sup>1</sup> and at the meeting between the Russian and Moldovan presidents, Boris Yeltsin and Mircea Snegur, in Moscow in June.<sup>2</sup> To an increasing degree - after the signing of the agreements - support for the stationing of Russian troops in the CIS countries have been expressed also by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Vladimir Shumeiko.<sup>3</sup> Shumeiko linked the establishing of military bases in the former Soviet republics to Russia's economic interest. "Russian bases help us to keep part of the market in those countries," he said.

### *Joint air defence system*

On 10 February at the CIS Heads of State Summit, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine approved guidelines on a joint air defence system.<sup>4</sup>

The main points of the guidelines are:

- 1) A coordinating committee on air defence matters is to be set up under the Council of CIS Defence Ministers to coordinate the work to create a unified air defence system for the CIS members.
- 2) The Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Federation Air Defence Forces - Viktor Prudnikov - will be appointed chairman of the coordinating committee.
- 3) The committee's membership will include the commanders of air defence and air force troops of the CIS countries, deputy chairman of the coordinating committee and other officials according to the decisions of the Council of CIS Defence Ministers.

It would take about five years to create a united air defence system in the CIS, according Viktor Prudnikov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Air Defence, who is in charge of the joint air defences. He is also of the view that Russia is ready to grant necessary funds to CIS countries for ensuring higher flight safety and legal use of CIS air space.<sup>5</sup> The Head of the Staff for Coordinating Military Cooperation, Col-Gen Viktor Samsonov, has even gone a bit further in claiming that new air defence body can be established on the basis of the former headquarters for air defence of the former Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup>

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev sees the agreement as being the first step to the creation of joint armed forces within the CIS "which is vital for the security of the Commonwealth".<sup>7</sup>

The agreement is weakened by the fact that Azerbaijan which hosts a large missile defence early warning system did not sign. Moscow is continuing to negotiate with Azerbaijan, and Viktor Prudnikov (commander of Russia's air defence system), responsible for the unified air defence system, does not rule out the possibility of persuading Moldova to sign the agreement on joint air defence. According to Prudnikov the "Western direction", i.e. Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine has the most secure air defence system, while the "Caucasian direction" is weak at the moment.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Segondya, 31 May 1995, "Ministerstvo oborony Rossii pobedilo MID."

<sup>2</sup> Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 29 June 1995. In FBIS-SOV-95-125 p. 11. Monitor, 14 July 1995, Vol. 1, No. 52, Jamestown.

<sup>3</sup> Interfax, 6 July 1995. In FBIS-SOV-95-130 p. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Sodruzhestvo, No. 1 (18), Minsk 1995, pp. 34-37.

<sup>5</sup> Interfax, 8 February 1995. In SWB SU/2224 S1/1 (10 February 1995)

<sup>6</sup> Interfax, 14 February 1995. In SWB SU/2229 A/2 (16 February 1995)

<sup>7</sup> Krasnaya Zvezda, 10 February 1995, "General armii Pavel Grachev: Integratsia vooruzhennykh sil SNG realna."

<sup>8</sup> Interfax, 9 July 1995. In FBIS-SOV-95-131, p. 2. In addition, Russia wants Azerbaijan - the only CIS member free of Russian forces - bases at Gyandzha and Gabala. See Prism, 4 August 1995, Jamestown.

### *Protection of external borders*

There is considerable disagreement between the CIS on the issue of joint border protection, in spite of Moscow's pleas for the urgent need for a coordinated border policy. This is natural since an independent state must, and certainly would want to, protect its own borders. In addition, many borders are disputed by the member states. Other factors are Moscow's limited financial resources to exert any pressure, and the fact that the Russian federal border program - just recently adopted - will only be implemented in full in 2000. It is planned in two stages (1996-97 and 1998-2000).<sup>1</sup>

The efforts to agree on guidelines on patrolling the CIS external borders came to nothing at the 10 February Summit. However, at the CIS Heads of State Summit on 26 May seven states signed documents regarding the border issue. Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan did not sign. Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma said that "there are no external borders in the CIS, there are only external and internal borders of each specific state."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Argumenty i fakty, No. 26, June 1995. In FBIS-SOV-95-127 pp. 25-27. Interview with Andrei Nikolayev.

<sup>2</sup> Krasnaya Zvezda, 30 May 1995, "K itogam minskoj vstrechi: eshcho ne vse shlagbaumy razrusheny."



There are however bilateral border treaties between Russia and Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Joint commands are being discussed with Belarus and Kazakhstan.<sup>1</sup>

According to Andrei Nikolayev, the chairman of Council of the Commanders of Border Troops the concept of the joint protection of the CIS borders is to be finalised in the second half of 1995.

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<sup>1</sup> Rossiyskiye Vesti, 11 May 1995. In FBIS-SOV-95-091 pp. 21-22.